THE BI-MONTHLY

Newsletter of the Bisexual Center

Volume 4, Number 2 March/April 1980

It's no use
Mother dear, I
can't finish my
weaving

You may
blame Aphrodite
SOFT AS SHE IS
she has almost
killed me with
LOVE FOR THAT BOY

SAPPHO

COVER: This poem was written 2500 years ago by Sappho, who lived on the Greek island of Lesbos (from which the word "lesbian" is derived). The calligraphy is by Kerth O'Brien.

BISEXUALITY IN THE ARTS

The Bi Center has plans to host an art exhibit sometime this summer entitled "Bisexuality in the Arts. We know that the Center is filled with many talented people, and we would like to encourage them to create and submit works based on this theme. We are particularly interested in paintings, drawings, graphics, sculpture, photography, calligraphy, and stained glass.

If you would like to have your work on display, or are a member of the Center and would like to help put the show together, contact David Lourea at 567-3871 or write to him in care of the Bi Center.

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WANTED: Thursday night office person to answer phone and questions from people inquiring about the Center. The hours are: 7:30-10:00 p.m. Your help is greatly (if not desperately) needed. Contact Michael Gray at 261-2821 or Neil Fullagar at 929-1678.

THE BISEXUAL CENTER

P.O. Box 26227
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(415) 922-2300

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this issue

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DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME WE TOLD HIM ABOUT... US?
I THINK IT'S TIME I TOLD HER ABOUT... ME AND LUIGI!

Book Review

BARRY AND ALICE: PORTRAIT OF A BISEXUAL MARRIAGE, by Barry Kohn and Alice Matusow. Prentice-Hall. 1980. ($10.95)

As one of the partners in a 10-year bisexual marriage, I was grateful and thrilled to hear of the publication of a book which discussed the issues we have been struggling with for so long.

It was gratifying to discover that Barry Kohn and Alice Matusow had done an excellent job in presenting an open, honest look at the long drawn-out process they went through in their 13 years of coming to terms with such a difficult relationship.

It was extremely validation to find so many similarities to my own experience. At last, some one has put down on paper a record which shows the world that such relationships can and do work, and what kinds of people and attitudes are necessary for success in such an endeavor.

My only objection to the book is a technical one. Barry wrote some chapters and Alice wrote others. It would have been much easier to follow if they had indicated at the beginning of each chapter who was speaking. They create total confusion in one paragraph where a sentence which says "Barry and I" follows one which says "Alice and I." Better layout and editing would have produced a superb book.

It is, however, well worth reading and fills a clear need in the bisexual community and in our society at large. Highly recommended.

----Lee Olivier

(Editor's note: For a chance to meet and talk to Barry and Alice, see the article on page 8 of this issue about their upcoming evening at the Bi-Center.)

PHOTOGRAPHY AT THE BI CENTER

The Bi Center will be host for a one-man photography exhibit by Thomas Talo from March 1st through May 1st, 1980.

In addition, Tom is currently working on an extended photographic project of same-sex couples who have lived together for 5 years or more. The intention is to dispell the myth that same-sex couples are incapable of creating and sustaining lasting relationships. The photographs will be taken in a relaxed informal setting, preferably the couple's home surroundings. Future uses of the results include a photographic show and a book.

SWEET 15 AND NEVER BEEN STRAIGHT

Middle America,
where all the girls
grew up Janis Joplin
and all the boys
grew up Jimmy Hendrix
and with orgasms of joy
ran to the oceans
and jumped in

-Jim Gove

POETRY AT THE BI CENTER

Beginning March 16th, there will be a poetry reading at the Bi Center the third Sunday of each month at 7:30pm. The featured reader for March will be Paul Mariah, an editor and publisher for Manroot Press, well known Bay Area poet, and author of "This Light Will Spread - Selected Poems, 1960-1975." An open reading will follow, so please bring your poetry. $2 donation.

Echoes of a Meeting....

Barely did I feel
you want me
  So timid did
I see you.
  That, when I
felt you
  Saw what you meant
to be,
  I loved you and
was not afraid.
  Now, tender heart,
be clear
  Teach me a truer
strength,
  Be alive and let
me live
  That our hopes
and fears
  Would guide our
honesty.

-Michael

So gently you came to me,
so very carefully at first,
so afraid I'd run away.
I don't know why I didn't.
Somehow I felt your tenderness
  through my pain.
Then when I knew
just how much you could mean to me,
somehow, I was not afraid.

Marilyn

HOLISTIC LOVING

BY

DAN ROBINSON

POLY-AMOURY -- Having many loves and many kinds of love relationships with many kinds of people, including bisexuality and non-monogamy. Emphasis on love rather than sex. No suppression of one relationship by another.

To me the last part means several relatively equal, non-competitive relationships rather than one primary and some on the side. (This article is mainly about the non-monogamous side of poly-amoury.)

Basically the word "bisexual" has only anatomical meaning. It refers to having sex with either of the two common sexual anatomies- male or female. When we talk of the love relationship between the genders of the personalities involved rather than the sex of the bodies we find a continuous spectrum of types from feminine to androgynous to masculine. We can make love in many ways (sexually and otherwise) with many kinds of people.

"Monogamy" basically refers to reproductive relationships, for which perhaps it's preferable in our present culture. In love relationships it's a different matter. My ex-wife, among others, says that sexual love is sacred and should be restricted to just one person. I reply that sex is a form of communication and as such, yes, sacred, but therefore that it shouldn't be restricted in any way -- except as it interferes with other communications. I see no reason for imposing any restrictions on sexual expression that I wouldn't impose on the verbal kind.

(Though I say poly-amoury emphasises love rather than sex, sex or sexual love is mentioned a lot here because it's the area of our lives, and especially our love relationships, which is the most restricted and needs the most work.)

Bisexuality and non-monogamy go well together since one can't possibly be actively bi- and monogamous at the same time. I've heard it said that bisexuality is just an excuse for screwing around. Personally I don't need any excuse! If it is "in the nature of 'Man' to love one another," then it would seem that identifying myself as totally straight, gay or monogamous would not be a matter of who I love or choose as a sex partner but of who I automatically reject.

The power and the number of gay separatist groups of both sexes seems to be increasing. I think this is a path back to increasing patriarchy. I can imagine individual feelings of male superiority (which many of both sexes still retain) turning into feelings of male societal superiority.

Non-monogamous people are perhaps the most unrecognized and unaccepted minority (?) group. More and more people "come out" as gay or bi-, but few come out as non-monogamous even to themselves. Virtually all terms referring to us have negative connotations: promiscuous, unfaithful, cheating, screwing around, etc. But this is to be expected in a culture which tries to keep up the pretense of being monogamous, and in which many non-monogamous people continually try to fit. I feel that many of the sex-related social problems today (and therefore much of the drama, both real and fictional) result from the conflict between monogamous traditions (which I feel are no longer valid) and our natural desire for unrestricted sexual love. Perhaps you're thinking, "Wouldn't life be awfully dull without these conflicts?" Fine, let's restrict verbal communication in similar ways, as we already do to a large degree, so that we can enjoy more fantasies about what we would like to say. Or would it make more sense to eat just a few kinds of food so that we can learn to enjoy those kinds more?

On the other hand many people feel just the opposite, that multiple intimate relationships would greatly complicate their lives. But this problem arises from being conditioned to feeling competitive and insecure about sex as well as about many other things. Many relationships we would otherwise

develop become ones of sexual rejection and pretended secrecy which we take for granted as being necessary complications in our lives. I feel I have a more basic, more inherent need for love, affection, intimacy, touching and, yes, sex than I have for the competitive games which we are used to playing in order to meet those needs. Apparently most people feel differently.

To me loving (very different from being "in love") means having concern for a person's feelings--caring. If my lover is happy at the moment in bed with someone else, real love doesn't produce jealousy--only happiness because my lover is happy. Also, hopefully, their love for me will mean that I won't be automatically excluded from their relationship. Why should the couple be considered the basic social unit? When I see a couple engaged in conversation or any other activity, why should I feel any more excluded than if there were a different number of people? When the number of people in a viable, intimate relationship can vary (including celibacy) then competition becomes less of a factor.

One "criticism" which might be true for some non-monogamous people is that they "aren't capable of reaching a high level of intimacy with anyone and so must keep looking." If it were possible to measure the amount of intimacy or happiness in one relationship and compare it to that of another, it might turn out that we have a greater need for intimacy than most people are able to handle, and are less inhibited by the cultural monogamy. Anyway, is the intensity of one relationship the only useful criteria to judge by? Would ten "units of happiness" from one relationship be better than five from each of several relationships?

There are two realistic problems of open relationships. The first is VD. (Prevention of pregnancy is an inconvenience for some, but should no longer be a major problem for thinking people.) It's my belief that closed, life-long marriages evolved as a survival method to control the spread of VD. In an unstable political and economic world it's not good to be dependent on establishment sources of antibiotics. With them, VD is a nuisance. Without them it can be deadly within a couple of generations. Eliminating VD should be a high-priority goal for poly-amorous people.

The other possible danger of unrestricted love is more philosophical. One theory says that we need restrictions, competition, feelings of insecurity and jealousy in order to have the motivation to maintain and advance our culture. I guess this is the "justification" for the whole competitive system. Freud said, "Culture . . . obtains a great deal of the mental energy it needs by subtracting it from sexuality." But he also thought that this reduced human aggressiveness. Evidence seems to suggest that sexual restrictions actually tend to arouse aggression. I think we need to establish a new compromise between accomplishment, progress, etc. and sexuality without going too far in the other direction.

"Love is something if you give it away you end up having more." Therefore we can't really give it away or even share it because these phrases imply that we end up with less. We can only make more love (in many ways) and thereby end up more able to love.

Though I'm not expecting to convert many people with this article, I feel it's important to present "wholistic" poly-amoury as a positive, viable lifestyle and give support to the great majority--at least, of our readers, who have been non-monogamous at some time in their lives and feel guilty about it.

-Words of Historical Interest-

Won't it be nice
when the day comes
when
words like Homosexual
Heterosexual
Bisexual
are historical curiosities
reminiscent
of a time
when such distinctions
seemed to have meaning

Jim Gove

COMING ATTRACTIONS

I CHING CLASS

At 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 15th, Jim Gove will present a short class on the philosophy and mechanics of the use of the I Ching. Please bring 3 coins. There will be a $3 donation.

MEET THE AUTHORS

Many sexologists have predicted that the 1980's will be a decade that sees a greater understanding, tolerance, and awareness of the realities of bisexuality. If this is true, we could have gotten off to no better start than a new publication by Prentice-Hall called Barry and Alice: Portrait of a Bisexual Marriage. The authors, Barry Kohn and Alice Matusow who have been married for 13 years, are intelligent, perceptive and extremely articulate. Thanks to the courage it took to share their own coming out process, the reality of being a married bisexual man or woman never again has to be as alienating or lonely an experience as it has been. Countless numbers of marriages will be helped as a result of their efforts.

We are extremely fortunate and grateful to be able to provide our members and friends with the opportunity to meet these two unique individuals. They will be speaking at the Bi Center on Friday evening March 14th at 8:00pm.

Following their presentation we will have a wine and cheese social. A limited number of copies of their book will be available at slightly reduced prices for members. A donation of $2 is requested. For a review of the book see page 4.

POT LUCK

On Saturday, April 19th, we'll have a pot luck party from 7:30 to midnight. Bring your favorite cullinary treat to share.

DONATION: $2 for members and
$3 for non-members

PARADE

June is months away but already there is a lot going on with the Gay Freedom Day Parade and Celebration. Participation of women and men from the Bi Center would make a real contribution. General meetings Sunday March 2, 16, & 30, 5 PM at 150 Eureka St. near 18th, San Francisco.

BI NIGHT AT THE SUTRO BATHS

The first Bi Center night at the Sutro Baths was such a success that we're doing it again. Twice, in fact.

FOR WOMEN: Sunday, March 16. We'll meet at the Center at 7pm and go en masse.

FOR WOMEN AND MEN: Saturday, April 12th. Meet at the Center at 9pm.

Tickets will be available in advance at the Bi Center for $5. If you are unable to buy your ticket in advance, they will also be available at the door with a Bisexual Center membership card. A picture ID is always required to get in. For more information call the Center at 922-2300

GAMES NIGHT

There are three games nights coming up: March 6th, and 27th; and April 10th (all Thursdays). Bring your favorite party, board, or card game and come have a good time with the rest of us. Munchies, drinks and smiles to share are welcome. We start at 7:30p.m. and would like a $1.00 donation.

SHAMROCK PARTY

On March 22nd we are having a Shamrock Party in honor of St. Patrick's Day. Munchies will be supplied. Bring your favorite shamrocks and something to drink to share. This is our big bash this month, so come and help us make it happen! Donation: $3-members; $4-non-members. 9 PM

MAY DAY DANCE

Tired of the rain? Want to celebrate the arrival of Spring? Come frolic with us on Saturday, May 3rd, starting at 9 p.m. Bring your friends and something to drink to share. Munchies will be supplied. Donation: $3-members; $4-non-members.

Groups and Workshops

SPIRITUAL RAP GROUP

A chance for those of us who have or are following a spiritual direction to get together and share our insights, problems, and questions about integrating spirituality into our daily life (including our sexuality, profession, lifestyle, etc). Sunday, March 23 at 7:30pm at the Bi Center.

I WANT TO BE CLOSE--
WAIT! NOT THAT CLOSE!

INTIMACY WORKSHOP FOR MEN AND WOMEN

A one-day workshop to explore ways of sharing intimately with others and to examine the risks and rewards involved in this process. We will examine the ways we set limits--and the ways we can push beyond those limits--in our intimate communications on both emotional and sexual levels. The workshop includes both verbal and nonverbal sharing in dyads and small groups.

Led by David Lourea and Marilyn King
Cost: $20 for Bi Center members
$25 for non-members.
Time: Saturday, April 26, 1980,
10am - 6pm.
Place: The Bi Center, 1757 Hayes, S.F.

Preregistration is essential. To preregister send a check to David Lourea at the Bi Center. Deadline for preregistration is April 19. For more information, call David at 567-3871.

COURSE ON TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

One of our Bi Center members is also a qualified teacher of Transcendental Meditation. He will hold an informal meeting on Sunday, April 6 at 7:30pm at the Bi Center to discuss what T.M. is and the benifits of daily meditation.

This meeting is free and entails no obligation. An actual course of instruction will be held later in April for those interested. A portion of the course fee will be donated to the Bi Center. For more information, call Scott at 751-7019

COMPUTERS!

...along with bisexuality, the wave of the future. In this 1/2 day workshop, we will look at the new microcomputer revolution, which makes sophisticated programs (word processing, accounts rec/payable, client billing, records management, etc) available for even the smallest business.

We will have at least two computers at seminar and will be going over to Computerland of the Castro for some more demonstrations.

Saturday, April 19, 11am. $15 donation to the Bi Center.

CLEANING OUT YOUR CLOSETS

A day devoted to finding some safe ways to communicate your feelings and experiences about bisexuality to important people in your life such as parents, friends, lovers, etc.

We will examine messages we have received about ourselves, about our sexuality, and about sexuality with same-sex vs. other-sex partners. We will explore how these messages have hindered our full developement as a person and how we can replace these messages with affirmations of who we really are.

Led by: Marilyn King & David Lourea
Cost: $20 for Bi Center members
$25 for non-members
Time: Saturday, March 29, 1980
9:30 am - 6 pm
Place: The Bi Center

Preregistration is essential. To preregister, send a check for $5 to David Lourea at the Bi Center by March 22.

WEDNESDAY RAP GROUP

Our drop-in rap group is being held on Wednesday nights. The emphasis of the group is on getting to know one another in a casual rap rather than getting into "heavies" which can be dealt with only in on-going groups. Although an exchange of ideas and information can be very helpful, the group does not provide therapy; however, the Bi Center can provide referrals to qualified therapists.

We will be asking for a $1 donation to help support the work of the Center.

If you are interested in meeting other people and knowing more about the Bi Center, why not drop in on a wednesday night at 7:30pm.

Community Bulletin Board

OFFICE HOURS

The Bi Center is open to the public on Tuesday nights, from 5:30 to 7:00 pm and Thursday nights, from 7:00 to 10:00 pm. Give us a phone call, or stop by, look the place over, and get aquainted. 922-2300.

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NEWSLETTER SCHEDULE

All contributions to the Bi-Monthly, including announcements, etc., must be in by the start of the Pasteup session. All articles longer than 50 words must be in by Layout day. All sessions are held at the Bi Center, and your help is badly needed!

LAYOUT: Sunday, 4-13 1pm - 6pm
PASTEUP: Sunday, 4-20 1pm - 6pm

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!
RENEW NOW!

SPEAKER'S BUREAU

We have a coordinator for our Speaker's Bureau: Doug Friedman. We receive numerous requests for speakers and media interviews. If you are interested in being part of this activity, come to a training/organization meeting on Thursday, March 20th at 7:15 p.m. at the Bi Center. If you cannot attend the meeting, you can contact Doug at 929-0671 or 929-8867.

ALL TOGETHER

The Bisexual Center received a nice mention recently in the ALL TOGETHER newsletter. ALL TOGETHER offers a contact point for people with various sexual and relationship styles. Personal listings are accepted. For a sample copy send a buck and SASE to suite 1420, 205 W. Wacker, Chicago, Il 60606

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BISEXUALITY IS ALIVE AND WELL...

In Sonoma County, THE NEST has twenty members and is working energetically toward a bisexual community. 8166 Arthur Ave., Cotati, Ca 94928. (707) 795-9057.

In Sacramento, the BI-SEXUAL RAP meets Wednesday, 11am to 1pm in the Miwok Room, University Union, CSUS. Write c/o Woman's Resource Center, CSUS TJJ-5, Sacramento, Ca 95819. This group just celebrated its first anniversary.

In Oregon, there is interest in organizing a new group. Please contact Tom, P.O. Box 365, Salem, Or 97308.

In Seattle, a new group has formed. They have exciting plans and can be located by calling Seattle Counciling Center for Sexual Minorities.

We have also heard recently of groups in Davis and Marysville/Yuba. There are also ongoing groups in New York, Chicago, and Southern California.

BI-MONTHLY CALENDAR 1980

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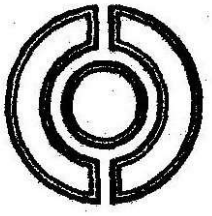

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